

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00990 091109Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3259

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR

FOR NEA ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP, ASEC, APER, LE
SUBJECT: TIMING FOR RETURN OF DEPENDENTS TO BEIRUT

REF: (A) STATE 047641, (B) BEIRUT 0884

1. WE HAVE BEEN GIVING CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE QUESTION OF RETURN OF DEPENDENTS TO BEIRUT. THIS MATTER IS OF COURSE CONTINGENT UPON CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN THE LOCAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT. WHILE WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY TRENDS IN RECENT WEEKS, THE TENSE ATMOSPHERE WHICH REMAINS IN THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE BEIRUT AREA AND THE SLOW PROGRESS IN REACTIVATING A RESPONSIVE GOL INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE INDICATES THAT WE ARE NOT YET OUT OF THE WOODS.

2. NEVERTHELESS, TAKING ALL FACTORS INTO CONSIDERATION, WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO AUTHORIZE NEWLY-ASSIGNED PERSONNEL TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR ADULT DEPENDENTS IF THEY WISH. AS THE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL AMERICANS IN BEIRUT INCREASES, THIS WILL NECESSITATE SOME EASING IN THE SECURITY NOW BEING PROVIDED FOR ALL OFFICIAL AMERICANS HERE, BUT WE BELIEVE THIS CAN BE DONE WITHOUT TAKING UNACCEPTABLE
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 00990 091109Z

RISKS. IN ANY CASE, GIVEN FAMILY STATUS OF PERSONNEL NOW ON BOARD AND THOSE THAT WE ASSUME WILL BE ASSIGNED SHORTLY IN RESPONSE REF B, WE WOULD NOT ANTICIPATE MORE THAN ONE OR TWO ADULT DEPENDENTS ARRIVING BETWEEN NOW AND JUNE.

3. THE QUESTION OF PERMITTING MINOR DEPENDENTS TO

RETURN IS MORE COMPLICATED. PRESENCE OF CHILDREN AT POST WOULD PRESENT TWO SPECIAL PROBLEMS: 1) IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL THEIR MOVEMENTS DURING WAFTER-SCHOOL HOURS AND ON WEEKENDS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF TEENAGE CHILDREN; AND 2) PRESENCE OF MINOR DEPENDENTS WOULD CREATE VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS IF IT BECAUSE NECESSARY IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION TO MOVE ALL OFFICIAL AMERICANS INTO THE CHANCERY ON SHORT NOTICE. WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT DECISION ON THIS QUESTION BE POSTPONED FOR THREE MONTHS, I.E., UNTIL JUNE. WE HOPE THAT BY THEN IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO RECOMMEND THE RETURN OF MINOR DEPENDENTS IN TIME FOR THE OPENING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR IN SEPTEMBER, 1977, BUT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO MAKE SUCH A RECOMMENDATION AT THIS TIME.

4. THE ABOVE IS OBVIOUSLY BASED ON THE SECURITY SITUATION AS IT EXISTS IN BEIRUT TODAY AND OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF WHAT FUTURE TRENDS WILL BE. THE SITUATION REMAINS VOLATILE, HOWEVER, AND ALL PERSONNEL BEING ASSIGNED SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THEY MUST BE PREPARED TO FOLLOW AT ALL TIMES EMBASSY'S SECURITY REGULATIONS GOVERNING THEIR ACTIVITIES EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY FIND THESE REGULATIONS IRKSOME AND ANNOYING; CANDIDATES FOFSSASSIGNMENT TO BEIRUT SHOULD ALSO BE TOLD THAT IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EVACUATE THEIR DEPENDENTS ON SHORT NOTICE.
PARKER

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